County Court Clerk

Spirit of the Age.

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Comfort.

Hast thou o'er the clear heaven of thy soul
Seen tempests roll?
Hast thou watch'd all the hopes thou would'st have won
Fade, one by one?
Wait till the clouds are past, then raise thine eyes
To bluer skies!

Hast thou gone sadly through a dreary night,
And found no light;
No guide, no star, to cheer thee through the plain—
No friend, save pain?
Wait, and thy soul shall see, when most forlorn,
Rise a new morn.

Hast thou beneath another's stern control
Bent thy sad soul,
And wasted sacred hopes and precious tears?
Yet calm thy fears,
For thou canst gain even from the bitterest part,
A stronger heart!

Has Fate o'erwhelmed thee with some sudden blow?
Let thy tears flow;
But know when storms are past, the heavens appear
More pure, more clear;
And hope, when farthest from their shining rays,
For brighter days.

Hast thou found life a cheat, and worn in vain
Its iron chain?
Hast thy soul bent beneath earth's heavy bond?
Look thou beyond;
If life is bitter there forever shine
Hopes more divine!

Art thou alone! and does thy soul complain
It lives in vain?
Not vainly does he live who can endure.
O be thou sure,
That he who hopes and suffers here can earn
A sure return.

Hast thou found nought within thy troubled life
Save inward strife?
Hast thou found all she promised thee, Deceit,
And hope a cheat?
Endure, and there shall dawn within thy breast
Eternal rest.

A Letter and a Telegram.

"I don't never waste words," said old Mr. Brown, in a hard, driving voice, "and I hain't good at letter-writin', but I reckon this'n will cut!"

"It's a pity you writ it so hard, father," said his young daughter, trembling; "it'll hurt her to the heart; she didn't never mean to borry that $300, and then cheat you out o' it."

"She didn't, eh? Then why hain't the money back in my pocket, safe and sound! It's a year last Christmas since she pestered me 'bout it, and I hain't seen hide nor hair on't yet; if that hain't a clear case o' cheatin', Fanny, I'll like to know what ye call it!"

The girl stopped churning a moment, and wiped a surreptitious tear from her eyelid before she answered: "Call it nothing, father, but bad luck; when Sister Mary borryed that money to lift the mortgage, she expected to pay it back; but you know as how Brother John he was took with the rheumatics, and the overflow came, and the crop was ruint and then she couldn't pay; that's all, and God knows it's enough!"

'Twasn't my fault," snapped her father, fiercely, as he pounded on the kitchen table to give vent to his anger. "I never put it in the agreement to 'low for overflows, and rheumatics, and sich like, and I never would ha' lent her the $300 if it hadn't been for your snifflin' and pesterin'. And now ye hear gal, not anuther dime o' my earnins shall they ever smell, and I'll never forgive——."

The girl sprang up from the churn, crying, "No, father, don't say it—don't, don't say it, father; you'll be sorry some day when it's too late; besides you're a church member, you know!"

"You're right 'bout that," said Mr. Brown, perversely; "I'm a church member, and don't owe nary a person a red cent, and the Bible says, 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' and I'm a going to have it!"

He pounded the table again with his fists, after a fashion he had of wanting to pound something or somebody when he felt particularly aggressive. But the sound of his voice had scarcely died away, when there came a knock at the door, and one of those ominous, yellow envelopes, marked with the impress of the Western Union Telegrah Company, was handed in. Mr. Brown took it, and looked it over in a helpless kind of fashion before breaking the seal. "How much to pay," he asked the boy, and passed over to him the change with trembling hand; though it was characteristic of the man that even then, with the knowledge that the telegram must contain terrible news, he was careful to count the dimes as they dropped back into his pocket. Oh, those cruel telegrams! Do the company ever remorsefully count the breaking hearts that are left in the wake of their messengers? Mr. Brown was a hard man, and loved his money-bags over well, but somewhere beneath the rough outward crusts there was an abiding affection for his children that needed something like the stirring of the soil around the violet-beds, to loosen the selfish bonds, and give his love a human voice. And when he lead these words, "Mary died this evening; come at once," a great, sudden anguish filled his breast, and silently handing the dispatch to Fanny, he walked from the kitchen and shut himself up in his own room, where years before death had made sundry visits. He did not cry out or fall, or make any sign that he was grief-stricken, but he was hurt to the soul, and a great remorse made him sick and faint. He had never put it in the agreement about sickness, overflows, and bad crops, as he had just said; neither had he "put it" that Mary, in her young blooming matronhood days, should die—his first born? How could he bear it? and it was all the harder because of the cruel words he had uttered while she lay dead at home. Did he say he would never forgive her—did he really—really say that? Fanny had tried to stop him, and brought it to his mind that he was a "church member" and a Christian. As if a father ought to be merely a Christian to his own child. Why hadn't he given her the money? Might have done so five times over and never missed it. And the old man groaned remorsefully, as with these thoughts in his heart, his gaze wandered over the great fields where the cotton would soon be a shimmering, fleecy sea, bringing new treasures to his hoarded gains, and making no hearts happy save his own.

Those few, poor, stunted acres of John's and Mary's! Swamped by the overflow last spring, stock drowned, and John, wading waist deep, fighting with the waters, laid up with the rheumatics.

Suppose he had given 'em a thousands dollars!

Oh, the sting of remembering evil when it is too late to turn evil into good. And then there was that unkind letter. Did his child read those cruel words with the dying light in her eyes, or would it be left for the stricken husband to be treated to the short, stern homily!

He went back to the kitchen, where Fanny sat crying over the telegram. "Lock up the house," he said in a hurried way, for fear of his voice would falter; "we'll go at once. I'll hitch up while ye get ready." And when they had started on their long journey he quite broke down in talking over the past and telling Fanny little things here and there that no one would have supposed he had remembered.

"Mary was allus a dutiful da'arter," he said, putting into broken sentences the grief and remorse that overwhelmed him; "after her ma died, and she wasn't knee-high to a duck, she was like a second pairent to the little uns; nussed 'em through the measles, and when they was well, took it herself, and laid as quiet on the bed for fear o' giving trouble as if she warn't a child."

He didn't tell her of how, when the second Mrs. Brown was installed as mistress, Mary became the drudge and maid-of-all-work, and was nurse to a half-dozen more little Browns, who, like their mother, ruled her with a rod of iron. Nor of Mary's marriage with a sturdy, young fellow, who, for the lack of a little timely help, and the pressure of a large family, was kept with his nose to the perpetual grindstone. He did not tell how Mary pinched and worked, and sat up till late hours, and struggled to help her family, until in consequence of doctor's bills and babies, and poor crops, John was forced to give a mortgage on his house, when her (the father) might have lifted them out of their poverty. He might even have given them a better house; the oldest inhabitant could not remember when the ugly, ramshackle affair had been built. Some ancient ancestors had put up a couple of rooms, then added on a few more, until, what with patching and propping up, John's inheritance was an offence to the eye. Mr. Brown thought bitterly of all this through the long journey. Too late, too late seemed written in words of fire on every tree and shrub. At last the house was in sight; a poor, miserable place enough, but now, in the month of June, sweet with climbing roses and honeysuckle that the mistress's hand had trained to the porch.

"Who-o-o, Dandy." The children were in the yard; with a shout they ran to the gate, and as the old horse stopped, somebody rushed down the steps, and with a cry, "Why father, why Fanny," Mary in her famous clean calico and apron, and cheeks likes roses, with the pleasure and excitement of the visit, was in her father's arms—her father, who held her as he had never done before, and kissed her with the tears running down his face.

"My child," he said presently, "you were dead, and are alive again. Thank God!"

"Why, father?" questioned Mary again, what on earth is the matter?" And she looked with frightend gaze at her sister, vaguely wondering if her father were stricken with some sudden insanity. For answer, Fanny drew out the telegram from her pocket, and gave it to Mary.

"It's all a wonderful mistake," exclaimed the elder woman, glancing it over, and hugging father and sister excitedly again. "We have a neighbor, Mrs. Mary Harris, who died last evening; she has a brother living somewhere near you, and by the way, his name is Brown—Richard Brown—your name father. They carried you the telegram instead of him. What a pity he won't hear of it, so as to get there to the burying."

And so, between hysterical sobs and smiles, and everybody talking at once, and asking questions that no one dreamed of answering, they went in under the bower of roses and honeysuckle, and presently John hobbled from the field on crutches, and the story was told all over again.

And when Mary slipped out into the kitchen to get an early supper, old Mr Brown followed here and there, and she was folded tight in her father's arms again, while the tears streamed downed both their faces. It was as if she had been raised from the dead.

"My child," whispered the old man, "I hain't been the best of fathers to ye; I ha' shut my eyes and my heart when I ought to ha' been the one to help ye; never ye mind 'bout that money; don't ye say one word 'bout it, and we'll knock this old rattletrap down to-morrow, and I'll show ye how to build a house!"

And so he did, and a very comfortable house it was, where John did not have to stoop when he went in and out of doors. And would you believe it? The letter, all the more harsh for being so brief, never did reach its destination. Old Mr. Brown's chirography was of a very inferior sort, and the postmaster couldn't puzzle out the address, much as he desired so to do; then the letter was forwarded to the Dead Letter Office at Washington, and in due time was returned to Mr. Brown, who quietly and satisfactorily consigned it to the flames.

Novel Corn Planting.

The means used in planting corn in the semi arid Kansas belt enables that region to raise good crops of the great fattening grain of the United States It is by means of the listing plow, which throws the soil into high ridges, the middles being deeply pulverized in addition. In the trenches the corn is planted down in the permanently moist soil of the trenches, these being filled up in the process of cultivation. This trench, as plowed, is V-shaped, and sixteen inches deep. Until the corn gets strong, an inverted trough covers the rows as the cultivator passes, preventing the plows from rolling the soil over the plants. When the corn is ready for the second cultivation the trough is laid aside. The shovels are set to throw the earth to the corn plants, now strong and two feet tall, and they are also set to take the ground deeply. This cultivation throws almost all the earth into the trench that the lister threw out. The weeds are deeply buried. The surface of the field is level. The main roots of the corn-plants are at least ten inches below the surface of the ground and how much further they have sunk into the rich, damp, underlying ground, no one knows. But now no ordinary drought affects the plants. The hot southwest winds can blow, the mercury can rise until the integrity of the thermometer is threatened, the sun can course across a cloudless sky for weeks, but the corn leaves do not roll. The plants thrive, and, if a soaking rain falls between the middle of June and the middle of July, the listed corn will make a full crop.—*New York Sun.*

Insanity in the United States.

The increase of insanity in the United States during recent years is quite amazing. One is inclined to doubt whether the figures given can possibly be correct; but they are officially authenticated. Statistics show that in 1865 the number of insane people in the States was 24,042, a small percentage. In five years the number reached 37,432, and in 1880 the figures had grown to the surprising total of 91,959. In all probability the authorities have had until lately a careless system of investigation, and many lunatics have escaped enumeration. Even allowing a liberal margin for this, however, there seems reason to believe that insanity has claimed and is claiming an increasing number of victims. The race of life is run at a greater pace than it was, and the pressure is greater in consequence. Many organizations give way under the strain. It is said that the increase has been most rapid in the Western States, but no reason is suggested, and it would be deeply interesting to know why, for the causes which are in force there are doubtless in force elsewhere. The increase in insanity during the ten years from 1870 to 1880 was nearly 150 per cent., it is stated. From 1865 it is still greater, and, though this is far from a subject of jest, it may be wondered whether, if the proportion is maintained, it will not soon be necessary to calculate the small percentage of inhabitants of the Western States who retain their sanity.—*London Standard.*

A Weather Prophet.

It is possible, according to French authority, to foretell the weather, sometimes ten or twenty hours in advance, by observing and comparing the sounds emitted by a telephone connected by leads with two iron bars stuck into the ground a few yards apart. In case of a thunderstorm especially, a noise like that of shivering leaves increases until a flash of lightning occurs, when the sound resembles that of rain or hail falling on grass.

TIMELY TOPICS.

In France there is hardly any growth of population; and the French, so far from appreciating this condition, are doing their best to alter it. They in fact put a "bounty" on large families by causing seventh children to be supported by the State.

The remedy for corpulence, according to the *Lancet*, is in the method of eating and drinking. If we only ate more deliberately, it says, we should find half of our accustomed quantity of food sufficient to satisfy the most eager cravings of hunger. Let men of all classes who lead healthy lives resolve to eat and drink slowly.

The present population of the city of Buenos Ayres is estimated at 400,000. One of the local newspapers predicts that in a few years it will be the New York of the southern hemisphere. Emigrants are arriving in a steady stream, and if the proportion of the first six months of the year is kept up, their number will be 150,000 before the 1st of January next. Italians form the great majority of the incomers.

Getting into debt in Mexico is a serious business. If a debtor is unable to pay on the day his debt is due he is arrested and chained to a post for five days. Then an officer looks at him to see if his punishment has enabled him to pay his debt. Of course it hasn't, and so the debtor's labor is sold to the government for forty cents a day until the obligation is discharged. The government sends him with a gang of felons to a silver mine, and he does not see the light again until the debt is discharged.

The "Big Woods" of Minnesota well deserve the name, for they cover 5000 square miles, or 3,200,000 acres of surface. These woods contain only hardwood growths, including white and black oak, maple, hickory, basswood, elm, cottonwood, tamarack, and enough other varieties to make an aggregate of over fifty different kinds. The hardwood tract extends in a belt across the middle of the state, and surrounding its northeastern corner is an immense pine region covering 21,000 square miles, or 13,440,000 acres.

One curious revelation of the last census was the growth of the female population of the large cities. It was shown that New York contains about 25,000 more women than men; Boston has a surplus of 18,000 women; in Baltimore there are 17,000 more women than men, and so on in several others of the large Eastern cities. Fifty years ago it was the men who came to the cities to pursue their careers, while the women stayed at home; but more recently, women, both in this country and in Europe, have been crowding to the business centres.

A traveler describes a natural bridge, almost as interesting as the Virginia curiosity, spanning a cannon, about twenty miles north of the point where the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad crosses the boundary between New Mexico and Arizona. This bridge is sixty-five feet long and fifteen feet wide at the narrowest point. It consists of tough grit rock, underneath which the softer sandstones have been worn away to a depth of twenty-five to forty feet beneath the arch. Near by is a petrified forest. The stone tree trunks lie just beneath the soil, or half exposed, fallen in all directions. This point had never before been visited by a white man.

A movement is on foot to erect a monument over the tomb of ex-President William Henry Harrison at North Bend, O. It is on a natural mound in the midst of a pasture lot, and it overlooks the Ohio River. A dilapidated board fence, enclosing a space fifty feet square, separates the burial place from the pasture field. Within the enclosure are two or three old cedar trees. The tomb itself is a structure of brick, all underground except the gables, and it is covered with a roof of shingles, that are now dilapitated and rotten. Even the brick walls that show above the ground are covered with a green mould. A sloping cellar door covers the steps which descend to the vault, and even these doors of iron, exposed to the summer rains and winter snows, are eaten through with rust.

The Supreme courts in several of the Northwestern States have recently rendered opinions which are likely to work an important change in the trial of actions to recover damages for personal injuries. By the general practice heretofore followed the existence, nature and extent of the injuries alleged have been determined mainly by the evidence of the complainant and his own medical witnesses. But in the opinions to which we have referred the principle has been affirmed that the plaintiff may be required to submit to a personal examination by physicians chosen by the defence or designated by the Court. Decisions to this effect have lately been rendered in Iowa, Wisconsin and Nebraska, following a precedent established some years ago in this State. The analagous question has also been raised in criminal cases. But there it has been held that a prisoner cannot be compelled to submit to an examination of his person when such examination may afford evidence against himself.

It may be interesting to our readers to know where the bodies of our Presidents lie. Of the twenty-two that have occupied the chair from 1789 to date, but three are living, Rutherford B. Hayes, Chester A. Arthur and Grover Cleveland, the others are interred of follows: George Washington, at Mount Vernon, Va.; John and John Quincy Adams, at Quincy, Mass.; Thomas Jefferson, at Monticello, Va.; James Madison, at Montpelier, Va.; James Monroe, at Richmond, Va.; Andrew Jackson, at his old "Hermitage" home, eleven miles from Nashville, Tenn.; Martin Van Buren, at Kinderhook, N. Y.; William Henry Harrison, at North Bend, Ohio; John Tyler, at Richmond, Va.; James K. Polk, at Nashville, Tenn.; Zachary Taylor, at Frankfort, Ky., Millard Fillmore, at Buffalo, N. Y.; Franklin Pierce, at Concord, N. H.; James Buchanan, at Lancaster, Pa.; Abraham Lincoln, at Springfield, Ill.; Andrew Johnson, Greenville, Tenn.; James A. Garfield, at Cleveland, Ohio, and Ulysses S. Grant in Riverside Park, New York City.

Serpent and Fiddler.

Uncle Billy Adams was furnishing the music for a gathering at the residence of a well-known planter in Dooley county, given in honor of a visiting young lady from Augusta. The night was warm, and the windows were thrown open. Miss Alice, weary of dancing, noticed the bird cage hanging among the vines which grew over the veranda, the inmate of which was aroused to its sweetest strains of song by Uncle Billy's fiddle. Tapping her finger lightly upon the cage, Miss Alice felt the vinebuds playing about her hand. "My God!" exclaimed one of the dancers, as he looked toward the girl, "look there!" A shriek from Miss Alice, and she fell to the floor. As she fell a huge snake was seen circling down her arm from the cage across her shoulders, and as she lay prostrate gathered itself in a huge coil upon her bosom. With its mouth wide open, its fangs set, and pressing its head closely by the girl's cheek, the moment was one of intense excitement. The ominous rattle was heard when Uncle Billy's fiddle gave forth one of its liveliest airs, and the reptile quickly crawled off, wriggling its way toward the music and out of the house. "I dess knowed dat 'ud fotch um," said Uncle Billy, as he caressed his instrument. "Does creepin' creeturs is a might fond of music." The reptile was followed and killed, when it was found to measure eight feet.—*Globe Democrat.*

Petrifactions.

Petrified mummies' eyes are the latest craze for watch char

A human body, buried in a Bristol (N. H.) cemetery nine years ago, was removed and found to be petrified.

A petrified snake was recently discovered in a sandstone rock at Portsmouth, Ohio.

A petrified hickory log, four feet long and nine inches in diameter, was found lately about eleven feet below the surface, by workmen making an excavation in Greenboro, S. C.

Four petrified shark's teeth, from one-fourth to one-half an inch long, were brought up recently from the Americus (Ga.) artesian well, which is down some nine hundred odd feet, and has not yet reached a supply of good water.

The petrified wood found in the Rocky Mountain regions is rapidly becoming utilized. In San Francisco there is a factory for cutting and polishing the petrifactions into mantel pieces, tiles, tablets and other architectural parts for which marble or slab is commonly used. Petrified wood is said to be susceptible of a finer polish than marble or even onyx, the latter of which it is driving from the market.

The Use of Mosquitoes.

There had been a discussion in the parlor car on the uselessness of mosquitoes. This particular parlor car was running through the State of Michigan, where August mosquitoes are not noted either for their modesty or their smallness. After everybody else had given his opinion a young man accompanied by a young lady was invited to express his convictions on the momentous question. This young man was engaged in watching the face of the young woman, who was so sweetly sleeping upon his shoulder, breathing through her mouth instead of her nose. He was so vigilant in his guard against mosquitoes lighting upon the face of this fair one, evidently his own 'ittle tiredy bridey wifey, that his own neck and face were exposed to the assaults of the enemy.

"Do I think mosquitoes are of any use in this world?" he said, with severe slaps and scratches. "Yes, I think they are. It is their (slap) mission to remind a feller that (slap and scratch) this isn't heaven, after all, cuss 'em."—*Chicago Herald.*

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

A Barn-Yard Riot.

I learned a good lesson when I was a little girl, says a lady. One frosty morning I was looking out of the window into my father's barn-yard, where were many cows, oxen and horses waiting to drink. The cattle all stood very meek and still till one of the cows, in turning around, happened to hit her neighbor, whereupon the neighbor kicked and hit another. In five minutes the whole herd were kicking each other with fury. My mother laughed and said, "See what comes of kicking when you are hit." Just so I have seen one cross word set a whole family by the ears some frosty morning. Afterward, if my brothers or myself were a little irritated, she would say, "Take care, my children, remember how the fight in the barn-yard began. Never return a kick for a hit and you will save yourselves and others a great deal of trouble."

"Told a Lie With His Finger."

A little boy, for a trick, pointed his finger to the wrong road when a man asked him which way the docter went. As a result, the man missed the doctor, and his little boy died because the doctor came too late to take a fish-bone from his throat. At the funeral the minister said that the little boy was killed by a lie which another boy told with his finger.

I suppose that boy did not know the mischief he did. Of course, nobody thinks he meant to kill a little boy when he pointed the wrong way. He only wanted to have a little fun. But it was fun that cost somebody a great deal; and if he ever heard the result of it, he must have felt guilty of doing a mean and wicked thing. We ought never to trifle with the truth.—*Children's Friend.*

Friendly Lions.

Everybody who has visited a menagerie knows that the lion is capable of being taught. A lion exhibited in a Dutch menagerie would leap through a barrel covered with blazing paper. He was so tame that his keeper took his food from him several times, with no resistance save a slight clutch and growl.

If a lion is captured when young, and treated with kindness, he becomes attached to his master, and will follow him like a dog. Anderson, the Swedish naturalist, saw, in the hut of an African trader, one who was not only fond of his owner, but lived on the most affectionate terms with dogs, cats and other domestic animals.

Layard says, in his *Nineveh and Babylon*, that the pasha of Hilah, the town built on the ruins of ancient Babylon, had a tame lion, who was allowed to stroll, unattended, through the bazars. He had only one bad habit; when he was hungry, he would take possession of a butcher's stall, drive out the butcher, help himself to a joint, eat it, and then depart.

If he had a fancy to breakfast on fish, he would go down to the bank of the Euphrates, wait the coming of a fisherman boat, scare away the owner, pick out the largest fish, and break his fast at his leisure.

The pasha encouraged his pet to get his daily rations by this method, as it relieved him from paying fishermen's and butchers' bills. When the lion had appeased his hunger, he would stretch himself in the sun and allow the Arab boys to play with him, as if he were a large dog.

The captain of an English frigate kept a huge pet lion, which he had reared from a cub, that was so tame as to be allowed the run of the ship.

"Prince," as he was called, was more attached to his keeper than to his owner. One day the keeper got drunk, and the captain ordered him to be flogged. The grating on which the keeper, stripped to his waist, was tied, stood opposite Prince's cage. While preparations were being made for the flogging, the lion kept walking around his cage, stopping, now and then, to look at his friend and at the boatswain, who stood, "cat" in hand, waiting the word.

At the first stroke of the knotted tails on the man's bare back, the lion's sides resounded with the quick lashings of his tail. His eyes glowed with rage when he saw the blood begin to flow. With a roar of thunder he dashed himself against the cage's bars. They bent, but did not give way; and the lion, finding that he could not break out, rolled on the floor, shrieking as if in agony.

"Cut down the man!" said the captain to the boatswain.

"Go to your friend!" said he to the bleeding keeper.

When the man entered the cage, the lion seemed beside himself with joy. He caressed him with his paws, licked gently the mangled back, and then, folding him in his huge fore-limb, looked as if he dared the whole crew to take his friend from his embrace.—*The Youth's Companion.*

Grant and the Wood Thief.

When Grant lived in Missouri he found some one was stealing wood from his land. He watched one night and saw a neighboring farmer cut a tree, load it on his wagon and drive off. Joining him farther along the road Grant sang out: "Hello, Bill! Going to St. Louis with your wood?" "Ye-es." "What do you ask for it?" "About $4." "All right, I'll take it. Draw it over to the house." "Can't. This load's promised." "There's no use holding off. You must haul this to my house and pay me $20 for the rest you've taken. That will be only half price." "If I don't I suppose you'll sue me before the squire?" "No; we won't trouble the squire or the public. We'll settle this now," and springing forward Grant grabbed the fellow by the collar. This was enough. The fellow hauled the wood to Grant's house but begged the captain to keep still. That ended the thieving.